



January 2023

Vol. 25 No. 1

<http://www.tgcfernsoc.org>

**Our meeting this month will be “blended” by meeting in-person at the Judson Robinson, Jr. Community Center (2020 Hermann Dr., Houston, 77004 and/or via GoToMeeting – member’s choice.**

### **TGCFS MISSION STATEMENT**

Organized in 1998 by a group of fern enthusiasts (a.k.a. fern lovers, fernies, pteridologists), to cultivate, foster and promote interest in ferns and fern allies, the TGC Fern Society presents educational programs including “how to” sessions, presentations by local, national and internationally known fern experts, and field trips and tours-thus providing a forum for fern enthusiasts to visit, learn, share plants, ideas, information, and have a good time. A very informative monthly newsletter is published for members, and special events include presentations to other groups, fundraiser events, and a year-end holiday season party. **Regular meetings are held at 2:00 P.M. on the third Sunday of each month at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Herman Drive, Houston, TX, 77004. Phone (713) 284-1994.**

#### **A message from our President:**

Hi Everyone!

I hope everyone had a wonderful 2022!

It was an odd year; with all the things we knew pre-pandemic trying to get back to what we knew as normal. It’s been a struggle for everyone and unfortunately, we are not all the way back yet, but getting closer! We had a fantastic party at Malcolm McCorquodale’s home. He stepped up at the last minute to provide his home for the party! Thank you Malcolm for always being there for the Society!!

I would like to welcome everyone back to the Fern Society for the 2023 fern events! Thank you for asking me to be President of this wonderful society again. The board and I have been putting some new ideas together and planning on some new formats for the meetings going forward this year. I’m anxious to hear your feedback on these new changes that we plan!

Welcome to 2023 the year of ‘*Back to Basics*’! We have planned a year of growing ferns. A how to do it all and over the course of the year you will have an opportunity to learn how to divide different ferns and mount them or pot them up! We will cover a new fern family every month. I would like to hear back from you on what fern family you want to learn about, so we can get it on the calendar.

The new format for the meeting will be still starting at 2p. We will start the meeting off with any business we need to address, but quickly move into a show-and-tell session on the plant of the month. We will have the information published in the newsletter for you to print and bring to the meeting so you can take a few notes on the show-and-tell

and the answers to question that are asked at the meeting that was not covered in the handout. We will have a few printed copies at the meeting for those that forgot to bring theirs. We will have a few notebooks for you to at the meeting to start your own study copy on these ferns. That way you can go back and check on something you might need to refresh yourself on. We also now plan on bringing a few ferns of the fern of the month that you can purchase if you would like. We are hoping to give you an opportunity to grow some ferns that you are not able to find locally at the nurseries.

We will still have a speaker, but the program will now start at 2:30p. We will still be using the GoToMeeting format for those that cannot attend in person. Some of the speakers will be talking to us virtually, but we will be having more in person speakers this year. This will be about a 45 minute program. After the speaker has finished if we have more to cover on the show-and-tell we will conclude the meeting after we have completed this. We will be having more hands on type programs this year so please let us know what you would like to lean about!

We still plan on our very popular Raffle table, so please plan on bring your raffle items so we will continue to share some amazing plants!

*New* will be an attendance prize. We will be drawing from the people present at the meeting, a nice fern to encourage growing more and different ferns. This will be open to any that attend in person, even nonmembers. Refreshments are always a big hit for our society members. *We are looking for someone that would like to be the hospitality chair for this year!* Larry Rucker has done a

fantastic job for the last couple of years of meeting in person. Thank You Larry, and thank you to all that helped by bringing your dishes and drinks. This is popular because of you guys! Please give me a call to let me know who will be taking this on! Thank you in advance!

The Newsletter will be sent out two weeks before the scheduled meeting (we're blaming the holidays for preventing it this month). We plan on getting more information in the newsletter again. I hope everyone will start looking forward to what they will be learning in the issue. We will have a calendar of upcoming events and meetings so everyone can plan their schedule to attend. This will also be on the Society Website

(<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>). If you use Facebook and are not on the Fern Society (Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society) page please go there and join. This is a good spot for added information on both the meetings and Ferns in general. Any last-minute changes to programs are also listed there.

I would like to thank Patrick Hudnall for taking the lead in the society for the 2022 year as President! Also to all the board members and chair people, and not least of all Paul Geiger for doing such a great job on the newsletter! You guys got us off to a good start meeting in person again!! Hats off to you!!

I hope your plants made it through the freeze!

I'm excited to get this year started off with a bang!

**One more item: there will be a meeting of the board immediately following our regular meeting.**

Darla



### Sunday's Topic:

#### The Fern Frond and How it Works

By: Dr. Christopher P. Krieg

Have you ever wondered what's in a leaf? What does it do for the plant? How does it work? Does it do different things for the plant at different ages of the plant? How does it help the plant to grow? We will learn all about the answers to these and many more questions as we explore the fern frond and all its many functions.



#### Bio of Dr. Krieg

Dr. Christopher P. Krieg (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA) is a plant ecophysiologicalist who uses interdisciplinary methods to uncover the ecological and evolutionary processes that generate diversity in plant form and trait function, and how physiological diversity shapes plant ecology and distributions. His talk will be about the evolutionary, ecological, and physiological factors that drive fern frond longevity and lifespan.



#### Dues! Dues! Dues!

Dues are payable for 2023.

Your dues may be paid in person at a meeting or sent by mail to me: Beth Ayer, 5815 Portal Dr., Houston, TX 77096.

Checks should be payable to: **Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society (TGCFs)**.

If you have any questions about the status of your dues please contact me at either: [beth.ayer@yahoo.com](mailto:beth.ayer@yahoo.com) or 713.729.0994 (landline; you may leave a voice mail message) or Ruby Adams. She may be contacted at: [radams13@sbcglobal.net](mailto:radams13@sbcglobal.net) or cell 281.830.4633.



### The American Fern Society (AFS)

The American Fern Society is over 120 years old. With over 900 members worldwide, it is one of the largest international fern clubs in the world. It was established in 1893 with the objective of fostering interest in ferns and fern allies. It exchanges information and specimens between members via their publications and spore exchange.

AFS non-professional membership (\$20) includes access to the Spore Exchange and subscription to the Fiddlehead Forum.

Professional membership (\$40) includes the benefits above plus access to the American Fern Journal.

**Please note that donations to the AFS are not tax deductible.**

To find out more about the Society and/or join, visit <http://www.amerfernsoc.org/>



### 2023 Officers and Committees:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	Patrick Hudnall
Secretary:	Ceil Dow
Treasurer:	Beth Ayer
Board Members-at-Large:	Ruby Adams Ken Warren
Education Chair:	Darla Harris
Hospitality Chair:	Larry Rucker
Library:	Ruth McDonald
Membership Chair:	Ruby Adams
Newsletter:	Paul Geiger
Spore Exchange:	Patrick Hudnall
Ways and Means:	Larry Rucker
Raffle, Store, etc.	TBD
Web Master:	Malcolm McCorquodale
Welcoming at Door:	Faye Stansberry



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2. Sign in with your Amazon username and password.
3. Then either go to “Your Account”, and under the box “Shopping programs and rentals”, select the option to “Change Your Charity”; or you can also hover your mouse over the small arrow next to the charity you are currently supporting and click Change.
4. Type Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society into the search and the click select.



### The December Party

The party was a lot of fun! We had a good turnout even though some forgot that the party in December is always a week earlier than our normal Sunday meetings. Malcolm hosted this year and his home and greenhouses were lovely as normal. We were lucky the big December freeze had not damaged any of his yard and some things were still out of the greenhouse. See below for some pictures of his plants. The gift exchange was great as normal with lots of ferns and gardening items.

Now for the important part, yes! The food was Wonderful!! We have the best cooks! From Turkey and Dressing, and special green bean casserole, Asian dumpling appetizers and handmade Gingerbread cookies, Pumpkin mousse and Tiramisu. Drinks: soda, wine and beer.

Thank you all!





## Fern Family of the Month: *Davallia*

On *Davallia* substrate:

*Davallia* and its closely related ferns are generally found as epiphytic or lithophytic plants. That is, they grow on the surface of living trees or decomposing trees, or on the surface of gravel or rocks. This indicates to us that efficient drainage is important to their success in our gardens. These ferns, often called Squirrel's Foot, Rabbit's Foot or Hare's Foot Ferns vary significantly in size. Their fronds may be anywhere from 2 inches to 20 inches. Often the smaller species are sold as terrarium plants, but be careful that you aren't sold a very young and small fern for your terrarium that will eventually grow to much larger proportions. The most commonly available plant of this fern group is usually the *Davallia trichomanoides* or "Squirrel's-foot" Fern. This semi-hardy to semi-tender fern is medium size in the group, with mature fronds around 10-12 inches in length. I feel ultimate size of the plant is relevant because smaller plants tend to like a more fine substrate, where larger plants do better with a more coarse substrate. I use the term substrate because most of these plants have rhizomes that grow on top of the medium rather than through a soil mixture. However, given a protected location I have had *Davallia trichomanoides* grow "on" my garden soil in a spot where the soil is loose and covered with compost, mulch and decomposing leaves. These ferns, especially *Davallia fejeensis*, often have some distance between fronds and between rooted sections of the rhizome. When their roots do enter the substrate, they like it to have both air and moisture around them. Most gardeners will have the best success with hanging baskets. I find growing ferns in hanging baskets receive less pressure from pests such as scale and slugs. These baskets may have an outer lining of coco fiber but where the fern is establishing, in the center, a significant amount of loose, long strand, sphagnum moss works exceedingly well. If you think you may not be able to water it as frequently as needed during the summer, you might consider adding a bit of leaf mould compost to your sphagnum moss. As these ferns have sensitive roots, I feel most comfortable fertilizing them with Fish Emulsion and Liquid Seaweed rather than long release or chemical fertilizers. If your *Davallia* basket is exposed to a drying breeze you may wish to water it by plunging it into a water filled tub. If, during brief cold spells you feel it is not cold enough to bring your basket into a heated environment, it would be prudent to withhold the water a bit, as cold wet roots are a receipt for rot. Although I have recommended hanging baskets, I have had much success growing these species of ferns in shallow clay pots using the same general techniques. If you are an avid gardener and enjoy tending to your plants, all sorts of mounting methods can be used. Such as attaching to the outside of a ball of sphagnum moss or onto a wreath of moss. This versatile fern can be good fun to grow, and with little effort should reward you with beautiful, graceful fronds.

### **The more common *Davallia* in the trade:**

*D. tyermanii* – white rabbit's foot is the most common and does quite well in our area being a zone 9 plant. It's a fast grower and putts off a lot of feet- the rhizomes. Making it a very attractive fern very fast.

*D. trichomanoides* is the black rabbit's foot and comes from Malaysia and likes to be grown in partial to full shade. 6-18" so a nice size plant.



*D. fejeensis major* – the deer foot fern comes from Fiji. This is a larger fern with large thick rhizomes that tend to grow downward. The fronds are large and coarse. No cold hardy

*D. fejeensis major* ‘Plumosa’ is a cultivar of the Fiji form, but is very soft and fine. This is the one grown at Longwood Gardens for those that have been there. No cold hardy.

*D. pyxidate* is not as commonly found, but needs to be! It’s rhizomes grow very upright and this can be planted in the ground as a footed ground cover. Zone 8-9.

*D. solida* has several cultivars. Grows well and makes a beautiful full hanging basket. Zone 9

*D. parvula* is a 1” frond that is grown in terrariums.

*D. repens* is also a terrarium fern with fronds 2”-6” with almost red rhizomes.

Submitted by: Pat Hudnall.



Black Rabbit's Foot – 1



Black Rabbit's Foot – 2



White Rabbit's Foot - 1



White Rabbit's Foot – 2



*D. fejeensis Major Plumosum*



*fejeensis major*





Feejenese major



D feejenese major Plumosum - 1



D feejenese major Plumosum - 2



D pyxidata - 1



D pyxidata - 2



D pyxidata - 3